

# REDUCING HOMECOMING STRAIN

## THINGS THE SERVICE MEMBER SHOULD REMEMBER:

- **Re-enter slowly.** Don't disturb a family set-up that has been working without you.
- **Expect changes in both your wife and kids.** (You've changed some, too!) Adapt accordingly. Remember, most of the changes that took place while you were separated produced growth and maturity. Be patient with any changes that seem negative. You will have plenty of time as a family to deal with those now.
- **Spend maximum time with the family.** If possible, postpone reunions with relatives and friends until near-normal routines have been re-established at home.
- **Don't try to alter your financial affairs.** Chances are your spouse has been handling them fine.
- **Take it easy on the kids,** especially where discipline is concerned. Don't barge in as the "heavy".
- **Expect that sex may be awkward** between you and your spouse at first. Talk it over.

## THINGS THE SPOUSE SHOULD REMEMBER:

- **Expect changes.** Both of you have experienced a great deal.
- **Remember, your returning service member has been subject to daily regimentation** and routine, so leave some room for spontaneity. Pre-planned events and schedules may be a problem with him/her for a while.
- **Be the family driver for a while.** It may have been some time since he/she has driven.
- **Your service member may want to celebrate their return with a spending spree.** If you can't afford it, hold tight to the purse strings. The urge to spend will pass.
- **Expect your returning service member to be surprised or hurt** that you've coped so well alone. If you sense this, reassure him or her that they are loved and needed.

## WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOUR SPOUSE RETURNS:

*All family members must realize that people change. We notice these changes more after a period of long absence.*

- **Expect some anger** and insecurity along with love and happiness. These feelings need to be expressed.
- **Expect your spouse to be different.** If he/she is not, fine. But if they have changed, you will be prepared by simply expecting a difference. This is good advice for both husband and wife.
- **Expect your spouse to want to be "babied"** by you.
- **Expect that it will be about six weeks to adjust to each other** again. If you're not getting along well at the end of six weeks, counseling might help.
- **Expect your spouse to have trouble sleeping** for a while. They are accustomed to a different lifestyle (and probably time zone); so it may take them a week or two to adjust.
- **Don't grill your spouse about personal problems** if they arise. Give him/her time to readjust. Swallow your curiosity. This goes for BOTH of you.

